

CONTINGENT FUND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JUNE 23, 1842.

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. LINN, from the Committee on Public Expenditures, submitted the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Public Expenditures respectfully report:

That, in order to complete the reform in the expenditure of the contingent fund of the House of Representatives, which has been so successfully commenced, it is indispensable that the purchase of articles of stationery and other supplies be subjected to some restriction and regulation by law. While it is true, as has been alleged, that at least one-fourth of the aggregate value of these supplies has been consumed in the most wanton waste and pillage, it is equally undeniable that at least another fourth has been thrown away in fraudulent contracts of purchase, made for the benefit of public agents, or lavished in the grossest profligacy upon political favorites.

The committee, at an early day during the session, had intended to report a bill to guard against this species of fraud, and would have felt it incumbent so to do, had they not learned that the Committee of Ways and Means were engaged in maturing a similar measure. But for this information, they would have extended their investigations, and added much to the mountain of fraud which already presses upon the files of the House, in regard even to this comparatively small branch of the public service. Enough, however, already appears, not only to justify but to command prompt and efficient legislation. With the view further to invite this, and to afford the House, in advancing its action upon the bill which it is hoped the Committee of Ways and Means will urge before the close of the present session, some interesting and novel facts on this subject, the committee beg leave to call attention to the depositions of Messrs. William Fischer and John T. Sullivan, stationers, and to the answers of William J. Stone engraver, to certain questions propounded by the committee, which follow:

Deposition of William Fischer.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, *City of Washington*, ss:

William Fischer, of the city of Washington, being duly sworn, says: That he is a stationer; that in 1838, and shortly after the election of Hugh A. Garland as Clerk of the House of Representatives, he applied to Mr. Gar-

land, in order to supply him with various articles of stationery for the use of the House ; that, upon such application, he offered to supply certain articles of stationery, enumerated in the schedule, hereto annexed, (marked A,) at the prices therein stated, and which prices are full, and would have afforded this deponent a fair profit ; that the articles so offered were of the first quality, and equal to those subsequently purchased by Mr. Garland from Mr. Langtree, at certain prices set forth in said schedule, and also appearing in Rep. No. 30, of House of Representatives, January 5, 1842.

And the deponent further saith : That the difference in the aggregates between the prices at which this deponent offered to sell the articles mentioned in the schedule, and the prices paid for the same by said Garland, amounts, as will appear from such schedule, to the sum of \$7,744 06.

And this deponent further saith : That the prices paid for the said articles by said Garland are very far beyond the highest market price ever required or paid for them before, as this deponent verily believes, and are enormous and exorbitant.

And this deponent further saith : That he has examined the prices paid for stationery during the 23d and 24th Congresses, and finds the same, in most cases, unprecedented ; as, for example, there was paid, during the 23d Congress, \$1,152 87 for 23,000 quills, being an aggregate cost of \$50 and upwards per 1,000 ; whereas the same quality of quills could readily have been obtained for \$33 per 1,000. During the 24th Congress there was paid for 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen knives the sum of \$1,178 12, being an average of \$44 75 per dozen ; whereas the same quality of knives could readily have been purchased at \$24 per dozen.

And this deponent further saith : That he has been engaged as a stationer for nine years and upwards, and frequently during that time furnished the Government with articles of stationery.

WILLIAM FISCHER.

Subscribed and sworn before me, this 9th March, 1842.

A. L. LINN,

Chairman Com. on Pub. Exp., H. R.

A.
 TWENTY-FIFTH CONGRESS.

Hugh A. Garland, Clerk, paid to S. D. Langtree, for the following articles of stationery, the prices annexed. (See Report No. 30, House of Representatives, January 5, 1842.)

ARTICLES.	Cost.	Average cost.	Offered at.	Difference.
For 483 gross steel pens -	\$4,569 39	\$9 46 per gross -	\$5 46	\$1,932 00
For 2,869 lbs. sealing wax -	3,931 62	1 37 per pound -	1 20	487 73
For 944 lbs. wafers -	1,332 01	1 40 per pound -	1 00	377 60
For 172 reams note paper -	1,559 50	9 06 per ream -	4 50	774 75
For 87,700 quills -	3,953 12	47 00 per 1,000 -	32 00	1,255 50
For 106 dozen knives -	2,602 00	25 00 per dozen -	21 00	318 00
For 106 dozen inkstands -	921 00	8 78 per dozen -	7 50	135 68
For 95 dozen folders -	615 00	6 58 per dozen -	4 50	197 60
For 93 dozen seals -	1,080 00	11 16 per dozen -	7 50	340 38
For 104 dozen parchment -	657 00	6 31 per dozen -	5 50	84 24
For 2,468 dozen tape -	2,739 30	1 11 per dozen -	62	1,184 64
For 36 gross lead pencils -	562 00	15 00 per gross -	9 00	324 00
For 322 sets tin boxes -	476 00	1 47 per set -	45	328 44
For 7 lbs. India rubber -	10 50	1 50 per pound -	1 00	3 50
	25,008 69			7,744 06
	7,744 06			
	17,264 63	Nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ less.		

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, *City of Washington, ss:*

John T. Sullivan, of the city of Washington, being duly sworn, says: That, for five years previous to the election of Mr. Garland as Clerk of the House of Representatives, he had supplied certain articles of stationery for Congress; and immediately previous to the election of Garland as Clerk, and while Mr. Franklin was Clerk, this deponent, pursuant to his instructions, had provided the usual supply of stationery for the public use, of the very best quality, and at the ordinary prices; that, early in the year 1839, this deponent called on Mr. Garland, and informed him that, for several years past, he had furnished a large portion of the stationery for the House of Representatives; that, on inquiry of those in charge of the stationery, he would learn that those supplies had given entire satisfaction; and, considering the superior quality of the articles, the prices charged were reasonable, and not exceeding those heretofore paid by Congress for articles frequently of an inferior quality. This deponent further remarked, that the late resolution of the House, directing the sale of unsuitable stationery on hand, would not embrace any article furnished by him; and, under these circumstances, he was desirous to know whether it was his intention to make any change. To this Mr. Garland remarked, that he had done nothing, as yet, in the matter; that Mr. Langtree had been spoken of and pressed by some friend or friends. This deponent said, in reply, that Mr. Langtree was neither paper maker nor stationer, and, from his inexperience, would not be a suitable person

to make purchases; and if he (Mr. Garland) did not think proper to purchase from this deponent, or some one experienced in the business, he could make the purchases himself, or they could be made by some of the gentlemen in his office, quite as successfully as by Mr. Langtree. To which Mr. Garland replied, that the *Democratic Review* was a very important work, and ought to be sustained. Here this deponent remarked that, in a political point of view, he did not consider the work of much importance, inasmuch as the mass of voters were not subscribers to periodicals; but if his object was to sustain the work, he might employ Mr. Langtree to execute such work as he was capable of, such as printing, &c.; and added, that deponent thought if he selected Mr. Langtree, who had no knowledge or experience in this business, and dismissed this deponent, who had the advantage of more than thirty years' experience as a stationer, and who, moreover, had given entire satisfaction, it would be doing an act in which he (Mr. Garland) could not reasonably expect to be sustained, even by his own political friends.

And deponent further saith, that the Mr. Langtree above referred to was of the firm of Langtree & O'Sullivan, of Washington, who at that time were publishers of the *Democratic Review*; that they were not stationers, and had not, as this deponent believes, ever carried on that business.

And this deponent further saith, that he has examined schedule A, annexed to the deposition of William Fischer; and that, in his opinion, the prices there set down are, in most instances, very extravagant.

JOHN T. SULLIVAN.

Subscribed and sworn before me, this 10th March, 1842.

A. L. LINN,

Chairman Com. on Pub. Exp., H. R.

Questions proposed by the Committee on Public Expenditures to William J. Stone.

1. Are you an engraver, and how long have you been in the employ of Congress?
2. Did you have a conversation with Hugh A. Garland, Esq., at the close of the last Congress, in relation to certain engraving; and if so, what was that conversation?
3. Were Langtree & O'Sullivan, the publishers of the *Democratic Review*, employed by said Garland to perform a large amount of engraving for Congress; and if so, what were the reasons assigned by Mr. Garland for so employing them?

Answers, by William J. Stone, to questions by the Committee on Public Expenditures.

Answer to question 1. I am an engraver, and have been occasionally employed to engrave for the House of Representatives for upwards of twenty years.

Answer to question 2. During the clerkship of Mr. H. A. Garland, I called at his office respecting engraving, and to inform him that the Clerk had heretofore procured the maps accompanying the report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office from the plates of the Senate, by which means the unnecessary expense of engraving was saved to the House, they only

having to pay for press work. Mr. Garland stated to me, that he could not employ me, as he had entered into a contract with Messrs. Langtree & O'Sullivan to furnish all engraving that was required; and that they had engaged to do it at a price fifteen per cent. less than had heretofore been paid. I then asked Mr. Garland how he could ascertain when he was paying more or less for the work, as it rarely occurred that maps were ordered so near alike as to enable him to fix a price by comparison; besides, the gentlemen he intended to employ were not engravers, and were as ignorant of prices of engraving as he was. They might be overcharged; and then, when they added a profit for themselves, the Government would be the loser. He then observed that they were young gentlemen for whom he had a high regard; and that they were the publishers of the Democratic Review, a work that he much admired, which was ably conducted by them, and ought to be encouraged. He further stated that, should I apply to them, probably they would make some arrangement with me. This I declined, on the ground that Messrs. Langtree & O'Sullivan had no right to a profit on my work, and that I would not be a party to any scheme to obtain money improperly from the Government.

Answer to question 3. I believe that Messrs. Langtree & O'Sullivan were the publishers of the Democratic Review. At the end of the last session that Mr. Garland acted as Clerk to the House, there were several large charts ordered by the House to be printed. I called on Mr. Garland, and requested him not to give the work to be executed until he made some inquiry; that it was important that charts should be properly engraved, and, as he did not understand the subject, he might be deceived. He told me that he would not give the work to any one until the Committee of Investigation (which was then in session on that subject) reported. I told him that was all I asked, as evidence had been given to that committee which showed that the lithographers, particularly Mr. P. Haas, had charged the House twice as much for lithography (which is an inferior kind of work, only worth half of engraving) as had been paid for engraving the very same maps for the Senate, which gave the lithographer four prices. Moreover, I said four or five instances had been discovered, and submitted to the committee. This showed that something was wrong, and should be looked into. The evidence given by me to this committee was submitted to Mr. Garland, and interrogatories put by him to me through the committee; some of which were answered, and others the committee thought unnecessary. Not feeling satisfied with my interview with Mr. Garland, I wrote a letter to Hon. R. W. Habersham, who was interested in the publication of some of the charts, (some relating to the coast of Georgia,) requesting him to intercede with the Clerk. The same terms as proposed in the letter were mentioned by me to Mr. Garland, a copy of which accompanies the evidence, which was, I believe, read by Mr. Habersham to Mr. Garland, previous to giving out the work. A few days after this, I called on Mr. Garland for his final answer; when he informed me that he had given all the charts to Mr. P. Haas to be executed. Whether this was giving the work to Langtree & O'Sullivan, it is not in my power to say. Mr. Haas did their work, and appeared to be some way connected with them. Perhaps there may be others who understand the nature of the connexion, and who would give the requisite information, which would serve to connect the evidence.

WILLIAM J. STONE.

APRIL 21, 1842.

WASHINGTON, June 26, 1840.

SIR: May I take the liberty of requesting you to intercede with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, and request him not to act on the charts, ordered last Saturday to be lithographed, until I see you this evening? I will then convince you, by ocular demonstration, of the impropriety of having them lithographed by the person you mentioned as having given an estimate for the same, by showing you charts lithographed by him, and the same done by me on copper. I will do them, in imitation of lithography, on copper, for fifty per cent. less than the prices charged to the House of Representatives by Mr. Haas, and bind myself to execute the work in a superior style to the best chart lithographed by Mr. P. Haas for the House. At the same time, I would suggest to you to make inquiry of any person familiar with the engraving and lithographing maps and charts, as the charts to be furnished are important, and worthy of some little inquiry before giving the work to be executed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM J. STONE.

HON. R. W. HABERSHAM.

The committee can hardly find language with which to comment upon the disgraceful transactions here exposed. If they were confined to the facts detailed by Mr. Fischer, from which it appears that, in the purchase of stationery costing \$25,008 69, the enormous sum of \$7,744 06 was paid, beyond the prices at which the same articles were offered by an experienced dealer, much explanation will be needed to give them character for fairness and integrity. Connect the transaction with Mr. Fischer with the facts to be gathered from the testimony of Messrs. Sullivan and Stone, from which it appears that the offers of these persons to furnish supplies and perform work were disregarded, for the ostensible and avowed purpose of encouraging the publishers of a political journal, and no doubt is left of the unmixt fraud which was perpetrated on the occasion.

If any doubt could remain, in the minds of the committee, of the character of these transactions, the intrinsic evidence afforded in the "Democratic Review," for the especial benefit of which this purchase seems to have been made, would go far to remove it. The editors of that journal most clearly prove that they were not ungrateful recipients of the public bounty, thus lavished upon them, through the intervention of Mr. Garland. In justice to them, as well as from regard to the estimate placed upon the talents and services of Mr. Garland by these *protégés* of the "contingent fund," the committee beg leave to present the following extract from the journal referred to:

Extract from the Democratic Review of March, 1839, pages 203-4.

"Immediately below the Speaker, at the centre of the semicircular table or tribune which fronts the Hall, the figure of a young man with spectacles, oval countenance, and hair brushed aside from his forehead, will attract the attention. It is Hugh A. Garland, of Virginia, the new Clerk of the House, whose election, at the commencement of the present session, over M. St. Clair Clarke, an opponent so influential and so popular that he was believed to be invincible, was a source of much congratulation to the Administration party, and of surprise as well as mortification to the Opposition. Though scarcely over thirty, Mr. Garland has brought to his pres-

ent position high political reputation, the more honorable as it was achieved in a State prolific of public talent, and where the science of politics is more generally cultivated and understood than in any other part of the Union. His career in the Legislature of Virginia was brilliant and successful. He was prominent among those who, in that highly respectable and leading assembly, took ground in support of the late President Jackson, upon the great financial questions which were agitated during his administration. In regard to the vital question now the test of political faith before the people of this country—I mean the separation of the Government from banks—he was emphatically a pioneer of those doctrines which the Democratic party has espoused and will sustain. With a quick genius, he combines the habit of labor; and to an entire purity of character, uniform courtesy of manner, and an amiable temper, he adds that firmness of purpose which is indispensable to political success, and which makes friends or creates respect, even where it disappoints. It has already carried him through difficulties that might have vanquished sterner spirits. Though thus decided in his personal opinions, Mr. Garland, as an officer, has won general esteem on both sides of the House, from the sincere impartiality with which he executes the duties of a situation which necessarily brings him into relations with every member. His manner of reading is scholar-like and effective. His voice is so well regulated, and his pronunciation so distinct, that it is evident he has cultivated reading as a polite art. In person he is tall and slender. His complexion is pale, and he has that slight and peculiar stoop of the shoulders which designates so frequently studious men.

“It is the general belief, even among his own party and friends, that Mr. Garland could not have been elected but for the successful introduction of the *viva voce* system of voting, by one of those consummate applications of parliamentary tactics so rarely possible, when brought to bear on a system so intricately complex as the standing rules and orders of the House of Representatives.”

“It is the flattering harp which never lacked golden strings;” at least so said the Welch minstrel, and so have the editors of the “Democratic Review” most assuredly proved in this instance. Whether or not the nation will consider this political *portrait* worth \$7,444 06 the committee will not stop to inquire. They feel that they have discharged their duty in bringing the transaction to the notice of the House and the country.

